

Jewish Families from Dunajska Streda, Slovakia

[This project seeks to collect all of the Jewish families from the town of Dunajská Streda, Slovakia.](#)

DUNAJSKA STREDA (Hung. Dunaszerdahely), town located on the largest island of the Danube River in S.W. Slovakia, now Slovak Republic. Towns and villages of the region had dense Jewish populations and most were supervised by the Dunajska Streda rabbinate.

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From the outset, both the royal treasury and the Palffy family burdened the Jews with heavy taxes. The Jews were occupied in crafts, agriculture, and trade in grain and spirits. Rabbi Simeon David officiated in the mid-18th century and by 1780 the community already had a second synagogue and such communal institutions as a ritual bath, kosher butcher, matzah bakery, talmud torah, and primary school (a *Beth Jacob school for girls was opened in the 1920s). The Great Synagogue was constructed in 1865. The earliest tombstones in the old cemetery were from 1755. (All Jewish religious installations, with the exception of a small synagogue, were pulled down by the Communist regime in 1950 and 1960.) In 1780 the Jewish community of Dunajska Streda was the second largest in the Hungarian kingdom, after Pressburg (Bratislava).

The community was a center of Orthodoxy and important yeshivot were also located there. Among the celebrated rabbis who officiated in Dunajska Streda were Alexander Meislisch (1784–1800), David b. Menachem Mendel Deutsch, and Judah b. Israel Aszód.

In the late 1880s there was an outburst of severe antisemitism. After an extended anti-Jewish campaign the synagogue was set on fire in June 1887. In the same year the Jewish quarter was sacked and hooligans attacked Jews in the street and in their homes. Not until military units were alerted did the attacks stop. In World War I, 220 Jewish men enlisted in the army; 46 of them died. During the war a large number of Polish Jews settled in the town. With the end of the war, the town was hit by another wave of pogroms and robberies.

The Zionists were active in the town along with the Orthodox political bodies. Jews were well represented in the municipal council, including Jewish members of the Communist Party.

With the entry of the Hungarian army in 1938, persecution increased. Budapest would not forgive Dunajska Streda Jewry its loyalty to Czechoslovakia. Anti-Jewish laws in existence in Hungary were applied to the conquered territories. Jews were left with no source of income, and lived on the charity of Hungarian Jewish organizations. In 1940 Jews were recruited into the labor brigades of the Hungarian army, where many perished. Around 200 Jews who were not able to prove their Hungarian citizenship were assembled in the late summer of 1942 and deported to the vicinity of Kamenets-Podolski in Poland, where they were executed by the Germans. During the years 1942–44 Dunajska Streda was one of the centers for smuggling Slovakian and Polish Jews into Hungary.

In March 1944 German forces occupied Hungary. A new wave of persecutions started immediately. On March 29, the property of local Jews was sequestered. The community institutions were closed down and in their stead a Judenrat was organized. On June 8, all Jews were ordered to assemble in the Great Synagogue and on June 13–15 around 3,000 were deported to Auschwitz.

In 1947 there were 404 Jews in Dunajska Streda. In 1948–49, most of the Jews immigrated to Israel and elsewhere. A community of around 20 families established regular services in the small synagogue in the 1990s and the congregation organized social activities, including a yearly memorial service.

The well-known Orientalist Arminius Vambery (1832–1913) was born in the town.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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In 1919 it became part of Czechoslovakia. It was ceded to Hungary once again by the First Vienna Award in 1938, but was returned to Czechoslovakia in 1945 after World War II. On June 15, 1944 2,970 Jews from Dunajska Streda and vicinity were sent on a transport to Auschwitz. In 1947–48, a portion of the town's Nazi minions was expelled to Hungary in accordance with Czechoslovakia's policies based on collective guilt and later by the Hungarian-Czechoslovak population exchange
Slovak: Dunajská Streda, pronounced [ˈdunajskaː ˈstreda] (listen); Hungarian: Dunaszerdahely; German: Niedermarkt; Hebrew: סַרְדָּאָהֶלִי (Sardaheli) is a town in southern Slovakia (Trnavský kraj). Dunajská Streda is the most important town of the Žitný ostrov area. It has a Hungarian ethnic majority